scholarship, Parens chose deliberately to disregard this evidence without discussion. His response to the arguments presented in my article (see note 5), a preliminary version of which I had given him in 1991, was the following: "I did not feel the need to include in the body of my text an in-depth analysis of Gutas's three arguments (in sections 1-3 of his article) 'proving' that the third text [i.e., Galen's Synopsis] is non-Alfarabian" (p. 152, note 31). Had he felt that need, he would have had to write a different book, one in which the thesis that Fārābī thinks that Plato's metaphysics is a rhetorical defense of law would have been untenable.

As it is, with both its basic assumptions invalid, the starting point of the book he did write has no basis in historical and textual fact, and consequently neither does its methodology and ultimately its conclusions. It is a fictional reconstruction of what Fārābī might have thought had he shared Parens's Straussian convictions and read Plato's Laws in Pangle's English translation.8 Those interested in Plato's Laws and Fārābī's Precise Exposition (Talhis) either in themselves or in the perspective of the history of the classical tradition can safely disregard this publication.

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Thomas Hobbes Tutor


One of the extraordinary things about the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), is how late in life he published his well-known works. He was in his fifties when he made his name with the publication, in quick succession, of The Elements of Law (circulated 1640, published 1650), De Cive (circulated 1642, published 1647), and Leviathan (published 1651). As a consequence Hobbes is best known for works written after he had adopted what he understood to be the new methods of natural science and was attempting to apply them to moral and political topics.

But the education and employment of Hobbes had been those of a Renaissance humanist. Recently much exciting work has been done to recover these earlier years and to assess their influence on his philosophy. Some years ago Leo Strauss first laid stress on a Hobbesian version of Aristotle's Rhetoric.1 More recently Richard Tuck has placed Hobbes in a tradition of late Renaissance humanism that, unlike the humanism of the early Renaissance, found its inspiration not in Cicero but in Tacitus, and developed a political stance around scepticism, Stoicism and theories of raison d'état.2 Noel Malcolm has investigated the early life of Hobbes and has published a complete edi-


tion of his correspondence (though what survives from the early years is disappoint-
ingly small). 3 Quentin Skinner, in an assessment of Hobbes’s use of rhetoric, has given a
detailed account of the education in the studia humanitatis which Hobbes would have
received during his years at a Grammar School and of his humanist activities as a tutor
in the earlier part of his career. 4

Hobbes excelled at school in Latin and, to an unusual degree for his time, also in
Greek. After five years at Oxford, he took up, in 1608, a position such as the Renais-
sance humanists often filled, as secretary and tutor in a noble family. This was the
Cavendish family, active in the service of the Stuarts both before and after the Civil
War. In this capacity he perfected his already considerable proficiency in the studia
humanitatis, which he had pursued at his grammar school and maintained through his
five years at Oxford, despite the scholastic curriculum of the latter, which he found
deeply unsympathetic. In the Cavendish household it was his responsibility to con-
duct business on behalf of the family, to handle correspondence for them into and out
of various languages, including Latin, French, and Italian, to supervise the studies of
the sons of the family, who included the second Earl and later the third Earl, and to
conduct them, on three separate occasions, on the Grand Tour of Europe, particularly
in Italy and France. He was also seconded from time to time from about 1617 to Sir
Francis Bacon, who had at this time a great intellectual reputation throughout Europe
which was unaffected by his loss of the Lord Chancellor’s office in 1621. Hobbes was
employed as a kind of literary assistant, partly as an amanuensis, to take down Ba-
con’s thoughts, as Aubrey puts it, 5 as he walked in his garden at Gorhambury, and
partly to assist him in translating his Essays into Latin for a European audience.

Hobbes’s earliest publications are also of a humanist kind. In 1629 he published a
translation of Thucydides, the first in English to be made directly from Greek, and
added considerable historical notes to them. The undertaking reveals a level of compe-
tence in Greek unusual for his time and an immense confidence in his own linguistic
abilities. About 1636 he published a Latin poem in praise of the Peak District in which
the Cavendish home of Chatsworth is situated, De mirabilibus Pecci, which he had
written for the family some ten years earlier. And in 1637 he published the first En-

glish version of Aristotle’s Rhetoric as A Briefe of the Art of Rhetorique, having earlier
translated sections of it into Latin for his then pupil, the third Earl. If these three works
are seen as Hobbes’s contributions to grammar, history, poetry, and rhetoric, his earli-
est publications in moral or civil philosophy, The Elements of Law and De Cive, may be
regarded as completing a cycle of publications in the studia humanitatis 6 (despite the
method of deduction which he employs in these works, an application of the new
‘geometric’ method to human sciences).

The present book sets out to identify some pieces which, if genuine, would be
earlier Hobbesian writings than any of the publications so far mentioned, dating from

pp. 13–44.
Hobbes: rhetoric and the Renaissance construction of morality,’ Proceedings of the British